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WHITHER CHRISTIAN MISSIONS?

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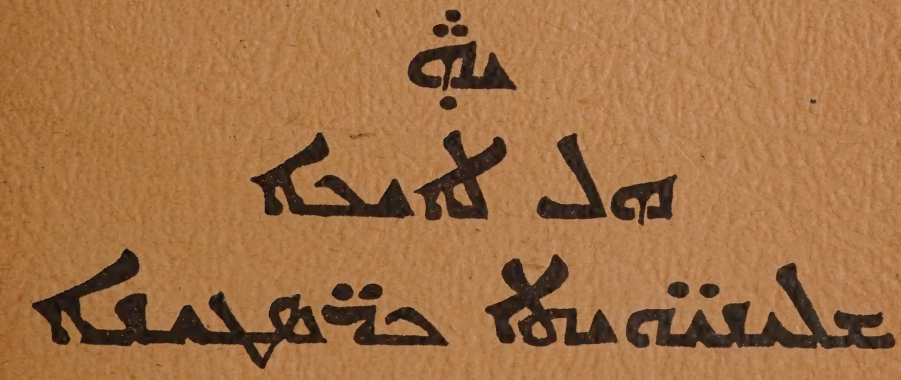
John Van Ess of the Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in America persecutes the Assyrian race and church.

By

D. BARSUM PERLEY, J.S.D.
Secretary, Assyrian National Federation

"May the Cross of Jesus be the protection of the servants of God."

— From an old Assyrian legend,
The original in Aramaic.



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A PRELIMINARY NOTE

The manner in which the Rev. Mr. John Van Ess has brashly intruded himself on the subject of the controversy between Iraq and the Assyrians is not calculated to destroy hate between the two peoples. On the contrary, his revival of the unpleasant facts of the past may threaten to upset the present. His observations with reference thereto are so misleading in fact as well as in logic that a defensive answer becomes a matter of urgent necessity.

The Assyrians in Iraq are the heroic remnant of the once mighty Empire of Nineveh and a Christian element of a most ancient and illustrious tradition. The Church of the East has contributed much throughout the centuries in service and martyrdom to maintain the Cross of Christ, and but for this valiant Church, the course of Christian history might have been changed. They speak Syriac, the language which Christ spoke.

During the crisis of 1933, forced conversion to Islam was the order of the day; while the proclamation of a Holy War against the Assyrian *infidels* was responsible for the creation of a universal belief in the Arabs that the crisis was a war between the Crescent and the Cross. Is it too much to say that this Christian missionary has played no mean part in the attempted process of *de*Christianizing Christians in the East?

These observations are intended primarily as an ardent message to the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in America. The wise course for it to pursue is to exercise a greater care and a more cautious judgment in the selection of its representatives who may not deviate from the narrow path of divine righteousness and whose conduct may reflect honor upon the high ideals that inspired John Calvin and the missionary enterprise of his Church.

Clifton, New Jersey.
October 9, 1944.

WHITHER CHRISTIAN MISSIONS?

"*Saul, Saul, why persecutest, thou me.*"—ACTS, 9 (4)

Students of history interested in the problems of national refugees and minorities in the Middle East were startled by the publication in America of John Van Ess' *Meet the Arab**, a friendly, indeed, a too complimentary book about the Arab, written in fullfilment of a promise he once had made to the late King Faisal of Iraq. It is a model eulogy to the valor and duplicity of the Arabs.

The author was an American Missionary of the Reformed Church stationed at Basra, Iraq, where he served the Arabs for forty years without making the slightest impression upon them with the teachings of Christianity. His book is not limited to Iraq, however; it comprehends the entire "Arabian Peninsula" with a characteristic, dogmatic proposal for the solution of the Problem of Palestine. *This Problem of Palestine is a lamentable one indeed, and were it not for too many such gratuitous offers of solution by self-appointed reformers, the simple Palestine Problem would have remained simple, and the age-old solidarity between the two peoples would not have become corrupted in the Holy Land!*

While these comments have reference solely to the Iraqi-Assyrian dispute (not a review), it would not be amiss to state that the book is a sham and entirely devoid of merit both as a literary production and as a source of information. It is written in a childish style and the chapters are marred by numerous inaccuracies which betray a certain superficiality of scholarship. As a source of information, it is a twisted and garbled tissue of mendacity and distortion of facts. What else could a book written with a pre-conceived bias contain? "The Arabs are my friends" is the opening sentence! When an author permits himself to become super-saturated with a blind admiration for the Arab and Arab viewpoint,

*N. Y.; The John Day Co., Inc., 1943

he can no longer be disturbed by the activities of such of their pro-Fascist leaders as the Mufti of Jerusalem, now in Hitler's service in Berlin; or with those of the former Prime Minister of Iraq, Rashid Ali and his clique, the "Golden Square", who attempted a miserable pro-Axis *putsch* at a critical moment in this War; or with those of the Chief of Staff of the Egyptian Army who sought to hand over to the Nazis Gen. Wavell's plan of action. Nor can his Christian conscience be perturbed by twisting the truth concerning the treacherous massacre of the non-combatant Assyrian Christians in 1933 by the Iraqi Government which "thought inexcusable", says he, it "was understandable, for the Assyrian leaders had been cocky and provocative to the point of exasperation."

What actually happened in the north of Mosul, the scene of the massacre, during the first weeks of August, 1933, surpasses in horror anything imaged by Dante in his vision of Hell. Some sixty-five villages[1] were looted and destroyed. Women were raped and made to march naked. They were then ripped open with knives and made sport of while in a state of agony. Priests were slaughtered after being barbarously tortured; holy books placed over their bodies and burned with them. Little girls of nine[2] were raped and burned alive. When there was no one left to kill, the armored cars proceeded to dash backwards and forwards through the dead and dying. In all three thousand defenseless Assyrians[3] were butchered. This massacre, noted for the black treachery in which it was conceived and the callousness with which it was executed, was preceded by the proclamation of a Holy War[4] against the Assyrians and attempts made to forcibly convert them to Islam[5].

There were two primary reasons why the Assyrians were being slaughtered: *first,* because of their loyal services to the British Empire[6]; and *second,* because of their proud refusal to purchase life at the price

1. *The Assyrian Tragedy,* Anon. Annemasse, 1933. P. 65.
2. William B. Ziff, *The Rape of Palestine.* N. Y.: Longmans, Green & Co., 1938. P. 408. Lt. Col. R. S. Stafford, *The Tragedy of the Assyrians,* London, 1935. Chs. 11 and 12.
3. T. F. Johnson, *International Tramps: From Chaos to Permanent World Peace.* London: Hutchinson, 1938. P. 357.
4. Yusuf Malek, *The British Betrayal of the Assyrians.* N. J.: The Kimball Press, 1935. P. 267; *Vide,* Ziff's *Rape,* P. 407.
5. "Such an exhibition of fanaticism has probably seldom been seen," the Archbishop of Canterbury in the House of Lords, Nov. 28, 1933.
6. Douglas V. Duff, *Guardians of the Holy Sepulchre* in Dublin Review, Oct. 1936.

of apostasy to Islam[7]. In the East religious quarrels follow national lines and vice versa[8].

Obviously, Dr. Van Ess is either unwilling or unable to appreciate the Assyrian position and problem with any degree of fairness and candor. Here is an abstract of his observations (p. 151-153):

> The Assyrians sided with the Russians against the Turks in World War I and were left out on a limb following the Russian Debacle of 1917. They fought their way to Iraq, and numbers of them were enlisted by the British in the Levies, financed and officered by the British. Being well-equipped and well-trained, and entirely Christian in religion, they incurred the resentment of the Iraqi Government. When the League awarded Hakkiari to Turkey, they demanded of Iraq a section of territory where they might settle as a single community with substantial autonomy. Iraq made generous arrangements for their settlement and administration, but there was no region available and sufficient to satisfy their demand. When Britain terminated its Mandate in 1932, the Assyrians took matters into their own hands; eight hundred of them went into Syria, only to return within two weeks, and in the re-crossing of the Tigris, they fired at the Iraqi post stationed there, which was, of course, *rebellion*. Fighting followed that resulted in the defeat of "the vaunted Assyrians." Then came the massacre in Someil which was the result entirely of local military decisions, and was not planned by the Iraqi Government, the blame of which must be laid at the door of Bekir Sidqi "Pasha" who was himself assassinated shortly thereafter by one of his own men.

A clear analysis of these observations will reveal the author's deliberate falsification of historical facts.

I. The Assyrians were led into their Odyssey as a direct consequence of the attempt made by the Russian and more essentially by the British Military authorities[9] acting under the instructions of the

7. D. V. Duff, *International Politics—Indictment* in the Catholic World (London) April 16, 1937.
8. Dr. W. A. Wigram in the Near East and India, Nov. 23, 1933, P. 969.
"The cause of these people appeals to me as being distinctly Christian in the widest sense. It is the cry which the pitifully small remnant of the CHURCH OF THE EAST raises to its strong sister CHURCH OF THE WEST to preserve it from extinction. It is felt generally that Christianity and Christian civilization have reached a great crisis."—Dr. E. W. McDowell's *The Plight of the Assyrian Christians*, in the Missionary Review of the World, June 1928.
Lord Hugh Cecil in a letter to the *London Times* having reference to this problem stated that Christianity is a far feebler emotion than nationalism and that "what is really an idolatry has world-wide sway." See *The Assyrian Progress, June* 1938.
9. "The primary cause of their distress was that they were Great Britain's allies during the War," Lord Hugh Cecil stated in the House of Lords on July 15, 1935.
"Because they made themselves our comrades in the common cause that they suffered most of their recent calamities." The Archbishop of Canterbury, Parliamentary Debates, H. L. Nov. 28, 1933, Vol. 90, No. 4, P. 127-8.

Eastern Committee of the War Cabinet, to make use of them as an Allied unit against the Turks in World War I. This policy was prompted not only by an appreciation of the high fighting qualities of the Assyrians but also by the recognition of their strategic position on the mountains of Hakkiari. The Assyrians made this desperate venture in joining the Allies upon the solemn assurances of Britain that they would obtain a firmer self-government under the *aegis* of the Christian nations at the conclusion of the War and that their independence would actually be guaranteed[10].

The fortunes of war did not smile, however, upon the Assyrians. A cruel fate pursued them; for, very early in the conflict of 1915, they were driven out of their homes and forced to flee to Persia. In 1917, the Assyrians were visited first by the emissaries of Maj. Gen. L. C. Dunsterville[11], and later by Capt. G. F. Gracey of the British Intelligence Service, attached to the British Military Mission in Trans-Caucasus. Their visit resulted in a joint-plan of action with the Russo-British forces, a plan that they followed to their own loss[12]; for in so doing, they lost their former homes and two-thirds[13] of their numbers. When the Russian front collapsed as a result of the Revolution, the Assyrians, now hard-pressed by the enemy, were again visited by a British agent, Capt. Pennington[14] of the Royal Air Force,

10. D. V. Duff, *The Screaming Mantle*, London: Blackie, 1939, P. 28.
Joel E. Warda, *The Flickering Light of Asia*, U.S.A. 1924, P. 167, 191, 219.
D. V. Duff, *Palestine Ablaze*, in the Dublin Review, July 1936.
Lt. Col. Sir Arnold T. Wilson, *The Assyrians and the Arabs*, in the Spectator (London), Aug. 25, 1933, P. 243. His *The Crisis in Iraq*, in the 19th Century and After, Oct. 1933 P. 414; Ziff's *Rape*, P. 406.
J. S. Ward in the London Daily Telegram, Nov. 10, 1933—"It was we . . . who invited them to rise against the Turks, and promised them their independence and our protection if they would do so."
The Living Age, Jan. 16, 1926, P. 152.
The Contemporary Review, April 1923, P. 410.
Fortnightly Review, Nov. 1925, P. 605.

11. *Adventures of Dunsterville Forces*, N. Y.: Longmans, 1920, P. 175-94. *Vide*, Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, April 1934, Vol. 21, Part 2, P. 267; Malek's *Betrayal*, P. 191. See f.n. 49.

12. Parliamentary Debates, H.L., Vol. 90, No. 4, P. 127-8; Malek's *Betrayal*, P. 17-18; Warda's *Flickering Light*, P. 85-90, 165.
Capt. Gracey was with A. MacDowell, son of the famous American Missionary Dr. E. W. MacDowell. See *Athra;* a Fortnightly Political Review, Beyrouth, Feb. 15, 1939, No. 5.

13. Letters of Gertrude Bell, Vol. II, P. 551 (Statement by Sir Henry Dobbs); Parliamentary Debates, H.L., Nov. 28, 1933, Vol. 90, No. 4, P. 142.

14. Ibid.
Dr. W. A. Wigram, *The Cradle of Mankind*, London: A. & C. Black, 1922, 2nd ed., P. 384, Ch. 17 (P. 357-91) is a reproduction of his *Our Smallest Ally*.
Joseph Naayem, *Shall This Nation Die?* N. Y.: 1921, P. 280-9.

who came to confirm on behalf of his government Captain Gracey's undertakings of the previous year and to beg them to hold on to their positions, which were threatening, until arms and munitions could reach them. Comparisons can bring no consolation to the afflicted, yet for purposes of appreciation, it must be acknowledged that while the Russians showed great admiration and loyalty to comrades-in-arms[15] in that a great number of their men and officers remained with the Assyrians even after the Revolution to share their difficulties and tribulations (although they had made no such express commitments to the Assyrians as the British had), the British broke every promise they had made and abandoned the Assyrians to their sad fate. Later, however, when the British foresaw the military value of the Assyrians as economic *gendarmes,* they urged the Assyrians to proceed to Iraq against their wishes, whose only desire was to return to their homes[16], and entrusted them with the task of policing on Britain's behalf the native Arabs and Kurds, their traditional, political, and religious enemies. This anomolous procedure had unfortunate results for the Assyrians—it aroused intense resentment and inevitable revenge among the natives whenever the moment *should become* opportune[17].

Such were the sordid motives that inspired the British in the formation of the Assyrian Levies in Iraq. In good plain English, the British had in view mainly the *economy* arising from the difference in pay between that of the British soldier and the Assyrian levy, and this, regardless of consequences to the right and future welfare and security of those whom the British employed in their service!

15. Malek's *Betrayal,* P. 19; Warda's *Flickering Light,* P. 68, 98. Russians as champions of Christians. Yonan H. Shahbaz, *The Rage of Islam,* Phila.: The Roger Williams Press, 1918, P. 40-41, 152.
"Some Russian officers continued with the Assyrian army, willing to die with them rather than desert them. They turned over most of their arms and ammunition to the Assyrians, and under the guidance of the Patriarch, reorganized and unified the Assyrian units and resolutely checked the Turkish attacks, inflicting heavy losses on the enemy."—George M. Lamsa, *The Oldest Christian People,* N. Y.: The Macmillan Co., 1926, P. 111-2.
The present Patriarch, distinguished by magnanimity and generosity of soul, acknowledged that the Russian Revolution resulted in disaster to the Assyrian national cause and that based on past experience of the Assyrians with Russia, "an Assyrian self-government would have been attained under Russia, if under no other protection." In Malek, P. 50.
See Dr. Abraham Yohannan's *A Church of Martyrs,* N. Y.: Putnam's, 1917, P. 117.

16. Fred. A. Coan, *Yesterday's in Persia and Kurdistan,* Cal.: 1939, P. 284; *The Assyrian Tragedy,* P. 36-37; Jo. R.C.A. Soc., April 1934, P. 260. Dr. Wigram's *The Assyrians and Their Neighbors,* London: G. Bell, 1929, P. 221.

17. Johnson's *International Tramps,* P. 344.
Parliamentary Debates, H.L., Nov. 18, 1933. Lord Hailsham's statement.
Jo. R.C.A. Soc., April 1934, P. 268.

II. After the Armistice, the British concentrated the Assyrians in refugee camps in Iraq and promised them "either an enclave or arrangement for safe and decent[18] existence." But the implementation of this undertaking, ordered the Colonial Office, must wait for the conclusion of formal peace with Turkey. Hence, the peace negotiations with Turkey became fitful and protracted. The British were primarily moved to this policy of delay and evasion by ulterior considerations. Their political eye was directed to the rich oil-fields of Mosul, and to that end their military power and uncanny genius for diplomacy were pressed into service. They knew that if the question of Mosul, the sovereignty of which was under discussion at Geneva between Turkey and Britain which claimed it for Iraq, were shelved, it would ultimately be settled in Britain's favor. It was an imperialistic trick. With significant irony, the Lausanne Conference left the Mosul problem open and referred it to the Council of the League. Kemalist Turkey argued before the League that the Mosul area was inhabited predominantly by Turks and that geographically it was an indivisible part of Turkey. Britain alleged, on the other hand, that it belonged geographically to Iraq and fortified its claim *via* Iraq, her protégé, by the moral force of the plausible argument that *there are Assyrians in the Mosul district who, as Christians, need protection from the Turks*[19]. A League Frontier Commission was then sent to the spot in September, 1925, and in a large measure, moved by the plausibility of the British argument on behalf of the Assyrians, the League gave (November, 1925) the province of Hakkiari (the former home of the Assyrians) to Turkey but directed the inclusion of Mosul in Iraq with a British mandate to administer the whole for a period of twenty-five years, dating from 1923, with the express understanding that *the territory north of Mosul was to be a home for these Assyrians with all their ancient rights of living in a homogenous settlement, with administrative autonomy, and the right to pay an annual tribute, not taxes, through the agency of the MAR SHIMUN, their Patriarch Prince*[20].

18. Curzon, H.L., Dec. 17, 1919; *vide* Malek's *Betrayal*, P. 186-9.
19. Eliahu Ben-Horin, *The Middle East: Crossroads of History*, N. Y.: W. W. Norton & Co., 1943, P. 56-57.
20. Wirsen Teleki Report: Turkish-Iraq Frontier. League Document, C. 400, M. 147, 1925, VII, P. 90; Wilson's *Crisis*, P. 417.
See Special Report of H. M.'s Gov't on the Progress of Iraq 1920-31, Colonial Office, No. 58 of 1931, P. 267 &c.

It was on these terms that the Province of Mosul was assigned to Iraq, and it was on these terms that Iraq accepted it.

In this settlement of their case, the Assyrians demanded nothing of Iraq. It was the League of Nations which insisted and stipulated that the Assyrians had definite, substantial rights in the region. Notwithstanding this, Iraq would not permit the Assyrians to form a single community but planned to divide them "into villages[21] of not more than a hundred families each and establish them in barren soil where malaria was rampant" in the effort of scattering them throughout the country so as to destroy their national and spiritual unity.

Did Iraq make generous offers of settlement to the Assyrians? Nothing can be more palpably false! In 1933, there were 20,000 Assyrians that were homeless, and those that held land were constantly in danger of eviction as they were merely serfs and tenants-at-will, and their lands were ample and fertile only in diseases[22], thorns, and scorpions.

The circumstances which led to the unjust solution of the contest over Mosul conclusively prove that there was something incongruous about Britain's tender regard for the downtrodden Assyrians. The struggle for Mosul was simply a struggle for oil, the most essential commodity for modern industry and warfare. The Assyrians[23], being a people of the precept of "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God" miscalulated, alas, the good intentions of the Imperial Government. The greatest Christian Empire on earth used moral principles merely as a plausible argument to attain a materialistic end, and when that end was attained, she would no longer consider abstract questions of

21. The Vienna Liberal Daily, by Dr. Wolfgang von Weisl—Reprinted in the *Living Age*, Nov. 1933, P. 226-8.

22. The Jo. R.C.A. Soc., Vol. 22, Part 2, 1925; *ibid* Vol. 21, Part 2, April 1934, P. 259. Gertrude Bell, *Progress of Iraq*, P. 272 etc.
"Almost every one of them had become a victim of malaria. Infant mortality had reached an alarming stage. Less than 1% of the children survived the first year."—Lamsa, P. 119.

23. Douglas V. Duff in *Guardians of the Holy Sepulchre*, Dublin Review, Oct. 1936: "Had they (the Assyrians) played the double dealing traitor to its interests like others, they would not have need to beg so pitifully for the right to be allowed to live." See Lamsa, P. 82-8.
The Assyrians are "the most God-fearing and peace-loving people on earth."—Dr. A. J. Oraham's *Assyrian-English Dictionary*, Chicago: Consolidated Press, 1943, Preface, P. 5.
"As to the Assyrians, I lost my heart to them completely. The poorest Assyrian of the mountains has preserved a natural dignity, courage, and a freshness . . . Mar Shimun's people struck me much in their ethnic capacity. I was not less struck with them as a Church. There is a naturalness, a simplicity, and a spontaneity about their religion. . . . They seem to illustrate the life of Christians of very early days. There is a remarkable absence of modern "corruptions" in their religion."—Heazell & Margoliouth, *Kurds and Christians*, P. 195-6.

right and wrong when, and particularly when, such questions had reference to the penniless Assyrians and other minorities. Lord Halifax[24] gave a realistic expression to this imperialistic behavior when he candidly admitted: "At times moral considerations must give way to imperial policy."

And, in the name of moral justice, *let us ask,* was there in reality any terrible oppression by the despicable Turk? The Assyrians, who enjoyed an autonomous existence in Turkey[25] since the 13th Century, and into whose territory the Turkish writ did not run, must surely know the answer; and in these days of dispersion of their nation and Church, they must most surely remember with nostalgia the good old days of the Ottoman Empire.

An exceedingly curious situation arose on May 21, 1924, at the Conference of Constantinople which dealt with the preliminaries of the contest over the Vilayet of Mosul. It was the contention of Fethi Bey of Turkey that no cession of land to the Assyrian territory was a necessity as the Assyrians could still find in Turkey the tranquillity and prosperity which they enjoyed for centuries. To this Sir Percy Cox replied that Fethi Bey's assertion did not square with the Assyrians' own views and that they had the most vivid memory of the treatment they had suffered in the past at the hands of the Turks which they could neither forget nor ever forgive. *Vide* Lamsa, P. 82-8.

There are two observations to be made in this connection. To say the bare minimum, the Assyrians were completely ignorant of the latter situation; nor did they ever know that they had authorized Sir Percy to speak on their behalf which he did with obvious grace and dignity. Secondly, despite his unctuous voice of omniscience, Dr. Van Ess seems to lack the slightest familiarity with the Assyrian Problem in Iraq. He is about as familiar with the above events as he is with logic, relevancy, fairness, missionary-motif, and Christian charity. That

24. Pierre Van Paassen, *The Honor of Protestant England,* in The Protestant, a Magazine of Affirmation, May 1944, P. 18.

25. Basile Nikitine, 'Assyriens' in Séances et Travaux de l'Académie Diplomatique Internationale, Paris, Recueil Sirey, No. 3, 1937, P. 33: "This Patriarchal and Tribal organization of the Assyrians dated back to the 13th century and was tacitly admitted by the Turkish Government" The Assyrians rebelled against the Turks during World War I not because the Turkish Government was notably bad but because they wanted independence at the instigation of Foreign Powers. They could not risk their lives only to have a change in masters. They relied upon the honor of the British Government and the nobility of the British nation not to prejudice the aspirations of the Assyrians. Malek, P. 242-3; Lamsa, P. 81.

which is applicable to this section of the book is applicable to the entire *Meet The Arab*. A school-boy would scarcely have been excusable for writing such literature!

III. Truth is not on the side of the Rev. Mr. Van Ess in his baseless assertion that there was no region available to settle the Assyrians in a compact body. In his frank eagerness to fulfill the terms of his promise to the Arabs of Iraq, he loses all sense of historic reality. Before World War I, Mesopotamia, now named Iraq, was part of the Turkish Empire, and since its dismemberment, Iraq was placed (January 1, 1918) under the British mandate on behalf of the League, pursuant to the Twelfth of President Wilson's Fourteen Points, assuring the nationalities, then under Turkish rule, of an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development. To give effect to this principle, Britain created an Arab *regime* in 1920 and an Arab Monarchy in 1921 under the nominal leadership of King Faisal[26], consonant with the joint-declaration of Great Britain and France (November 30, 1918) to the effect that the end they had in view was the "complete and definite liberation of the peoples so long *oppressed* by the Turks and the establishment of national governments and administrations drawing their authority from the initiative and free choice of indigenous populations . . ." In 1930, after negotiating the Anglo-Iraq *TREATY OF ALLIANCE* and *FINANCIAL AGREEMENT* which were to place the control of the main oil-fields and railways into the hands of the British magnates, Britain undertook to terminate its Mandate by urging the unconditional entry of Iraq into the League of Nations in 1932. This indigenous Arab population of Iraq was, prior to 1918, under the iron-heel of the Turk, and as such, the great majority were willing to renounce their claim not only to the territory north of Mosul, which was recommended by the Permanent Mandates Commissions as adopted by the League to be a home for the Assyrians, but to the entire Province of Mosul with its rich oil-fields, if by doing so, their independence could be accelerted[27].

Infinitely more significant and relevant than this is the statement

26. E. R. Hasluck, *Foreign Affairs*: 1919-37, N. Y.: The Macmillan, 1938, P. 227-30.

27. Sir George Buchanan, *The Tragedy of Mesopotamia*, London: Wm. Blackwood & Sons, Ltd., 1938, P. 280.

of May, 1924, made by the late Sir Henry Conway Dobbs[28], His Britannic Majesty's then High-Commissioner for Iraq:

> H. E., the High Commisioner, has ascertained that there are more than sufficient deserted lands, the property of the Iraq Government to the north of Dohuk in Amadia and the northern hills, upon which the Assyrians could be permanently settled.

To Sir Henry's averment must be added the conclusions of the *Rapporteur* to the Permanent Mandates Commission[29] holding that it had not been proved to the satisfaction of an impartial observer that lands combining the requisite conditions for the settlement of the Assyrians in a homogeneous group did not exist in Iraq.

IV. The circumstances which led to the termination of the mandate entirely falsify Dr. Van Ess' contentions that "the Assyrians took matters into their own hands after the termination of the mandate in 1932," and that there was a state of "*rebellion*" against the Government.

When in the meeting of the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League, that considered the application of Iraq for admission, grave apprehension was voiced about her spirit of tolerance toward the Assyrians and other religious and racial minorities, Lord Cecil and the British High Commissioner, Sir Francis Humphrys[30], assured the Commission that Iraq's spirit of tolerance was above suspicion. The

28. The Jo. R.C.A. Soc., Vol. 20, Part 2, April 1934, P. 265. *Vide* League of Nations, Protection of Minorities in Iraq, Official No. C.535, Oct. 2, 1933.
In his lecture before the Royal Empire Society, London, on May 30, 1934, Sir Henry said: "We have seemed by the abandonment of the Assyrians . . . to sacrifice our very honor. We have suffered the imputation that on the scene of their agony, we living have betrayed the hopes of our dead."
Buchanan's *Tragedy of Mesopotamia*, P. 285.

29. Provisional Minutes of the League Assembly, C.770, 1932 VI, C.P.M. 1930 (3).
Beyond giving expression to fine sentiments, the League, it must be stated, did nothing to justify the faith for which Woodrow Wilson gave his life. See Dr. Wigram's *The Assyrians, fc*, P. 236.

30. The presence of these two gentlemen at the meeting in Geneva was occasioned by the *MAR SHIMUN'S* S.O.S., signed by all the Assyrian Chiefs in 1931 and sent to the League in which he expressed his conviction that unless adequate guarantees were provided, the Assyrians would be exterminated by Iraq as soon as she obtained her independence; in the absence of such guarantees, he requested the League to arrange for the immigration of his people from Iraq. Johnson's *International Tramps*, P. 347.
The magic of the situation was the *policy of the Colonial Office*. It had in 1931 decided to transfer Iraq into an independent state and this high policy could not be frustrated by what the agents of the policy were pleased to term the whims of the Assyrians. That was the *mot d'ordre* of London and it became the *mot d'ordre* of the Civil Servants in Iraq. To their mind, the most radical way of solving the Assyrian problem with any pretence of decency, was to get the Assyrian race and Church forcibly merged into the body politic of Iraq. *Vide* Johnson's *Tramps*, P. 350.

Commission, however, especially its very able *rapporteur,* Pierre Orts, was less optimistic, and sarcastically amazed at the rapid progress of Iraq towards political maturity. As a matter of common knowledge, Iraq was "a politically backward[31] country," and did not possess the necessary qualifications for sovereignty. The late Thomas Lyell[32], as a result of his practical experience in the Civil Administration and as District Magistrate of Baghdad, stated in 1923 that the Arabs of Iraq needed seventy to one hundred years to learn the advantages of self-government and that they only desired self-government as an opportunity to escape from all law and order. Nevertheless, the British persisted in strongly supporting the candidature of Iraq even to the extent of stating[33]:

> His Majesty's Government realizes the responsibility in recommending that Iraq should be admitted to the League, which is, in its view, the only legal way of terminating the Mandate. Should Iraq prove herself unworthy of the confidence which has been placed in her, the moral responsibility must rest with H.M.'s Government which would not attempt to transfer it to the Mandates Commission.

Solely influenced by this declaration [34], and after washing their hands[35] publicly of any moral responsibility should anything untoward occur, the Commission reluctantly decided in January, 1932, to recommend Iraq's admission and when the Mandate (October 3, 1932) was brought to an end, "the Iraqis," in the words of Dorothy Thompson[36], "celebrated their new independence with a massacre of the Assyrians."

31. Hasluck's *Foreign Affairs,* P. 231.
E. H. Carr, *International Relations Since the Peace Treaties,* N. Y. 1937, P. 236.

32. *The Ins and Outs of Mesopotamia,* London: A. M. Philpot, Ltd., 1923, P. 7 &c.
Vide, Buchannan's Tragedy, P. 58-59, wherein Gen. Townsend found that there was not in Mesopotamia the usual safety one expects behind the front lines and called the Arabs "scoundrels" and "merciless." He continued: "On the battlefields they attacked the side they thought was losing, irrespective of whether they were British or Turkish, cut the throats and stripped the wounded, dug up the graves for the sake of the Khaihi clothing, and generally behaved like jackals and vultures."
On P. 165, Sir George continued: "No sooner had the Turks retired than a state of anarchy broke out (in Baghdad in the last War), with . . . and Arabs looting the bazaars and robbing and murdering indiscriminately."

33. Wilson's *Crisis,* P. 417; Malek's *Betrayal,* P. 264; The Jo. of R.C.A. Soc., April 1934, P. 264. A member of the Foreign Office Staff was heard to say at this time while the British representative was giving assurances to the League, "He is telling damned lies—and he damned well knows it." Johnson's *International Tramps,* P. 348, in Chapter XIV, *The Betrayal of the Assyrians.* Reports seem to indicate that the assurances were given by Sir Francis and that he and Lord Cecil were the only Englishmen present.

34. Parliamentary Debates, H.L., Nov. 28, 1933, Vol. 90, No. 4, P. 140-1.

35. Sir Alfred Zimmern, *Spiritual Values and World Affairs,* London: The Clarendon Press, 1939, P. 127-8.

36. Refugees: *Anarchy or Organization,* N. Y.: Random House, 1938, P. 44.

The above significant pronouncement on the assumption of moral responsibility made by Sir Francis is for its absurdity and extravagance unexceeded in the annals of chicanery. In 1930, Sir Francis frankly admitted that the Assyrians are "naturally apprehensive of what is likely to happen when the British Mandate is terminated"[37]; and that when that occured, the responsibility for minorities would have to be fulfilled by Iraq towards the League direct, and not through the British Government "as at present". When the massacre was a thing of the past, the British took the position, according to the true course of International Law, that no state[38] could interfere with the internal affairs of another sovereign state and obstructed every attempt at investigation into the affairs of the massacre. "Apportionment of blame," declared Sir John Simon at Geneva, "is a barren proceeding."

Bitterly disappointed with the action of the British Government[39] in renouncing its Mandate, after the lapse of only seven of the contemplated twenty-five years, without settling the Assyrian Problem, HIS BEATITUDE MAR ESHAI SHIMUN XXIII, 119th PATRIARCH OF THE CHURCH OF THE EAST AND OF THE ASSYRIANS, then at the age of twenty-four, proceeded to Geneva to make a final desperate plea for his people with a special emphasis on the vital problem of a *homogeneous group* which had been promised to them by the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League. Iraq, however, apparently vexed at this appeal to the League, and realizing that the MAR SHIMUM was opposed to the Government's policy of a *heterogeneous settlement,* invited His Beatitude (May, 1933) to Baghdad under the false pretense[40] "to discuss matters," and placed him under detention; and, subsequent to the massacre, he was to be deported to Cypress on August 18, 1933, in defiance of the Fundamental Laws and League guarantees.

37. See his letter to an anxious friend of the Assyrians in England, Dec. 15, 1930, in Malek's *Betrayal,* P. 317-8.
38. Pierre Van Paassen, *The Forgotten Ally,* N. Y.: The Dial Press, 1943, P. 310.
39. "As a result in 1932, after seven of the contemplated twenty-five years had elapsed, the Mandate was replaced by an Alliance with safeguards for our oil interests and our air communications with India, but none for the minority population" in Mosul. Zimmern's *Spiritual Values,* P. 127-8.
40. See the "secret letter" sent by Major W. C. F. A. Wilson, Administrative Inspector in Mosul, to the Gov't, dated May 10, 1933, stating in part: "Ask the *Mar Shimun* to come to Baghdad to discuss matters with the Gov't. Detention to follow forthwith . . . " Same surreptitious scheme was used as to Lady Surma. Malek's *Betrayal,* P. 238. Jo. of R.C.A. Soc., April 1934, P. 264-5.
The Patriarch is now in this country since July 29, 1940, on a mission of visit to his people. He was born on February 26, 1908, and inherited the office of Patriarch on June 20, 1920, at the early age of thirteen.

On July 11 and 12, 1933, several meeting were held in Mosul, at the special instance of the Government during which time Lt.-Col. R. S. Stafford[41], Major D. B. Thomson[42], and the local Mutasarref[43], advised the other Assyrian leaders that those who disapprove the land settlement policy of the Government "could leave[44] the country." The essential design of this conspiracy was to drive the Assyrians into what they might style *rebellion* that would furnish the pretense for a program of unconscionable extermination of the Assyrians. Completely disillusioned[45] and convinced that no fair-play could be had in Iraq, certain Assyrian representative leaders, with some hundreds of their men, elected to leave Iraq for settlement in the north of Syria, carrying their arms legally acquired, but "repudiating[46] all idea of *rebellion*." This was revealed in a letter[47] they dispatched to the Ministry of the Interior on July 23, informing the Government of their exodus and requesting the Government not to molest their families in Iraq. However, for justifiable reasons, these Assyrians returned from Syria, and while they were re-crossing the Tigris on August 4, 1933, the Iraqi Army "fired on the Assyrians—who naturally[48] retaliated." The news of the battle was broadcast throughout Iraq by the Government, declaring that it was the Assyrians who had first opened fire at the scene. It was a malicious distortion of facts. That these Assyrians "fired at the Iraqi Post" is an assertion that cannot be entitled to credit. *This* controversial argument contradicts itself in point of possibility. These few hundred Assyrians could not have been the aggressor; they had their families in Iraq.

His Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury was amazed at the use of the term *Rebellion*. "It cannot be fairly described as rebellion,"

41. Administrative Inspector in Mosul.
42. Appointed and paid by Iraq as land settlement expert in an advisory capacity.
43. Khalil 'Azmi, acting Mutasarif.
44. Jo. R.C.A. Soc., Vol. 21, Jan. 1934, P. 38-41; *The Assyrian Tragedy*, P. 45-46.
45. The intention of the Gov't was to effect a heterogeneous settlement and to deny the Assyrians the age-old tradition of recognizing their Patriarch as the head of their nation, or even of allowing him to exercise the protective measures permitted by th Gov't to Arab Chiefs. Johnson, P. 355.
46. Jo. of R.C.A. Soc., April 1934, P. 264-5. "An Amendment to the British Arms Regulations legalized the retention by the Assyrians of their British Army Pattern Rifles." Malek, P. 194, as stated by Lt.-Col. J. J. McCarthy.
47. *Ibid* P. 266, Brig.-Gen. Sir Percy M. Sykes said that this letter tends to prove that they were in despair at the idea of being scattered among the Kurds in small communities, while the fact that they left their women and children behind proved that there was no idea of *rebellion* against the Government.
48. Johnson's *International Tramps*, P. 357.

cried out His Grace in the House of Lords[49]. "They were told to go and find a new home if they could."

V. In the battle of August 4-5, 1933, which followed the attack on the Assyrians, the Iraqi Army was completely dislodged only to be rescued by the intervention of the Royal Air Force. Here is the unimpeachable testimony[50] of a disinterested ex-British Civil Commissioner of Iraq:

> But the position in which the British Government has placed itself today in Iraq is as intolerable as it is unparalleled. British advisers, whose advice is not asked; a British Military Mission forced to be silent spectators of foul deeds, four squadrons of the British Air Force, whose intervention has been confined of recent months to dropping leaflets on the Assyrians telling them to surrender. They did so, and were massacred a day or two later in cold blood.

These "vaunted Assyrians" who saved the British Army from utter disaster[51] in 1920, could not have been defeated otherwise. The courage and assertiveness of the Assyrians with a highland genius for mountain warfare, admitted Capt. Gracey, made them a terror to their enemies and a pride to those who commanded them. The regular British troops of 1919-20 undertook many punitive expeditions against the Northern Kurds but the Kurds were finally defeated only by the Assyrians although they were heavily outnumbered and outmunitioned. It was this successful stroke on the part of the Assyrians at a critical moment, asserts Sir Arnold, that put an end to all further outbreaks. In one engagement alone, the Kurds suffered losses greater than ever inflicted by all punitive expeditions alluded to above. And when the Arabs of Iraq rose against the Government, the Assyrians proved themselves to be more than a match for them. Indeed, so valuable was their assistance to the hard-pressed British that Gen. Aylmer Haldane[52] was led to declare:

> But for this enitrely fortuitous support, it is possible that a large portion of the Mosul Division might have been swamped in this wave of anarchy.

49. Parliamentary Debates, H.L., Nov. 28, 1933. "It is difficult to see what offense they committed that they should be termed *Rebels*," since they were told to go. Similar testimony given on November 17, 1933, (Jo. of R.C.A. Soc., Vol. 20, Part IV) by Lt.-Col. J. J. McCarthy who headed the British Military Mission to the Assyrians in Persia under Gen. Dunsterville. In Malek, P. 191-5.
50. Lt. Col. Sir Arnold Wilson's *Crisis In Iraq*, 19th Century and After, Oct. 1933, P. 422.
51. Wilson's *Mesopotamia: A Clash of Loyalties*, London: Oxford University Press, 1929, P. 291. *Athra*, May 15, 1939, No. 21.
52. A. Haldane, *The Insurrection in Mesopotamia*, London: 1922, P. 247.

Unsurpassingly glorious as the record of the Levies[53], some of the most valuable and spectacular services of the Assyrians have been rendered by ordinary clansmen[54] not enlisted in the Levies. The Assyrians who were the first to inflict defeat upon the Arab insurgents in 1920 between Baghdad and the Persian frontier and those who did very good work between Baghdad and Mosul, were not Levies but ordinary clansmen acting spontaneously on their own responsibility. Similarly, those who twice averted disaster in the Mosul Division were ordinary clansmen. Those who doubt the heroism of the Assyrians can recall the defeat of the Axis-planned rebellion in Habanniyah[55] near Baghdad in 1941 when the Assyrian Levies crushed Rashid Ali's Forces into impotence and forced him to flee to his paymasters in Berlin.

VI. Dr. Van Ess pretends that the massacre was not a premeditated act of the Government. This is simply not true. "Now that Iraq will secure a seat in the League," a press agent was informed by the Minister of Communications[56] (Rustam Haidar) during the latter part of 1932, "the extinction of the Christians in Mosul is inevitable, and is looked upon as a sacred duty of Iraq. If that opportunity does not present itself, we must find means to bring it about."

53. For their achievements, see Brig. J. Gilbert Browne's *The Iraq Levies*: 1915-1932, London: 1932.
Brig.-Gen. Browne was in command of the Assyrian levies for eight years, and later in 1934, he and T. F. Johnson went on a mission to Brazil for the purpose of investigating the possibility of settling the Assyrians in the state of Parana. Mr. Johnson came to learn that this officer knew the Assyrians intimately, and knowing them as he did, found it almost impossible to speak too highly of them (Johnson, P. 348-9). "I should have been proud indeed if a foreigner, possessing the same qualifications, had spoken in the same terms of my own countrymen." Mr. Johnson, late High Commissioner of the League for Refugees, was so impressed by the Assyrians that he courageously stated: "Feeling of loyalty to the Assyrians and national interests alike indicate that it would be a good policy to consider settling these morally and physically robust agriculturists on some of the large uncultivated tracts of Yorkshire, Westmorland, Scotland, or in the West Country. As Brig. Browne's opinion of them indicates, the British could only gain by contact with these people and by emulating their good qualities." Ibid, P. 380.
The opinion of these two exceptionally sincere and exacting men were formed not in a cocktail bar, club, or salon, as Mr. Johnson contended, but of people in the rough and under the acid test of war conditions in an unruly country, far removed from the amenities of life.

54. Capt. Rogers in Jo. R.C.A. Soc., April 1934. He stated that this matter was not correctly represented in the press. With the highest respect for the Levies and their officers, "we are under a heavy obligation to the Clansmen and to the whole nation."

55. Dr. W. A. Wigram's article *The Assyrians and Iraq, No More Betrayals* in the London Church Times, May 16, 1942, P. 285.
The Mar Shimun's Report to the Assyrians in the form of an address, Hartford (Conn.) Daily Courant, Oct. 15, 1943.

56. Malek, P. 224.

Nothing ever happens suddenly in history. The massacre under review did not come overnight. It was preceeded by many rehearsals; many portents and warnings. As early as 1923, precautions had to be taken against such a disaster by Col. Bovill at the special instance of LADY SURMA[57]. The High-Commissioner was warned again in 1932 that massacre would follow British withdrawal. Sir Francis "could not deny the danger[58] seeing that during his tenure of office he had had to put a stopper at two such occasions," one in 1929 and another in 1931. All this was before Iraq had ever acquired the status of an independent state.

After the surrender of the mandate, "the Iraqi Cabinet," in the words of Prof. J. Hampton Jackson[59], "determined on the extermination of the *infidels*." In the first weeks of August, 1933, a Holy War was proclaimed against the Assyrians and the Government press, officials, and deputies were in the foremost of those who advocated the *Jihad*[60]. During the same period, over 230 anti-Assyrian articles were published and many inflammatory speeches made in Parliament[61]. In addition, the details of the massacre were published in Beyrouth[62] before they were known in Mosul, and the Government offered the Arab tribesmen one pound bounty for every Assyrian head brought in. In the circumstances it is not a matter of surprise that attempts to punish the guilty were entirely lacking. Instead, the principal instigators were given a triumphal reception and decorated in Mosul. Rev. Van Ess does not have the humanity to disclose or admit that Bakir Sidqi *Bey* was promoted to the rank of *Pasha*[63] by the Cabinet only after he had become the chief executioner of the massacre. No arabomaniac can rationally be expected to do so. Flagrant omissions

57. Jo. R.C.A. Soc., April 1934. Aunt of the present Patriarch, now in exile in Cyprus. In 1919, Earl Gurzon said: "A more remarkable specimen of womanhood, and a lady more competent to speak for the interesting community to which she belongs . . . is quite impossible to imagine." Parliamentary Debates, Dec. 17, 1919, Vol. 38, No. 112. During the minority and absence of the present Patriarch, she was administering the temporal affairs of the Assyrians, and Mar Timotheos, the Metropolitan of India, was administering the spiritual affairs of the Church.

58. Dr. Wigram in Jo. R.C.A. Soc., Vol. 21, Jan. 1934. Bocob, *Iraq in a Nutshell*, in the Empire Magazine, Oct. 1932.

59. J. Hampden Jackson, *The Post-War World* :1918-34, Boston, 1935, P. 199-200.

60. Ziff's *Rape*, P. 407.

61. For a model, see the Al Istiqlal, June 29, 1933.

62. Johnson, P. 358.

63. Wilson's *Crisis*, P. 413. Illustrated London Magazine, Sept. 23, 1933, P. 459. Buchanan's *Tragedy*, P. 289. Jo. R.C.A. Soc., April 1934, P. 267.

are the indispensible companions of unsupported assertions, gratuitous assumptions, and fallacious reasoning; and, the Rev. Mr. Van Ess has shown to have a signal mastery of them all.

At the same time, a highly inspired message[64] from Baghdad read:

> Any attempt to apportion blame or impose punishment might have the most undesirable repercussions in this country, much more serious than the troubles gone before.

VII. Meanwhile as the Government was thus pursuing its venomous policy, with the connivance of the British Military Advisors, which clearly aimed at the destruction and extinction of the Assyrian race and church by merging it forcibly in the body politic of Iraq, the Patriarch was offered wealth for himself and his family if he would only approve their scheme of settlement. Since the scheme meant national destruction, he refused to accept it: "I take no bribe to abandon[65] my people." If this be provocation, the Assyrian leaders have most surely been "provocative," and this, "to the point of exasperation."

This provocation recalls another hero's devotion to duty. When the Assyrians agreed to leave their country and to fight for Britain and her allies in World War I, the late PATRIARCH MAR BENYAMIN SHIMUN[66] (uncle of the present Patriarch) was not moved by a threat from the Turks that they would hang his brother[67] (who was then a student at Constantinople) if the Assyrians rose and joined the Allies. His answer was: "Nothing would deter me from my duty." Hormizd D'Mar Shimum was accordingly brutally murdered by the Turks in Mosul. Poor Mar Benyamin, so heroic and faithful! Where is the ancient habitation of your illustrious fathers? Where are its solemn customs and usages that made the Assyrian society an ordered whole? Three decades ago, you brought the tribe you commanded so well from your ancestral valleys in the Hakkiari fastnesses to fight in a world war for the liberty of small nations, little knowing that it was

64. Wilson's *Crisis*, P. 420.
65. Dr. Wigram in Jo. R.C.A. Soc., Oct. 1933; and, in the Near East and India, Nov. 23, 1933, P. 969.
66. Assassinated on March 3, 1918, by Simko, a Kurdish Chief, at the instigation of the Persian Government. Patriarch at age of 18-33. Mar Benyamin was *Lady Surma's* brother. Wigram's *The Assyrians and their Neighbors*, P. 216.
67. Johnson, P. 241, Stafford's *Tragedy*, P. 29; Warda, P. 3-5, 202-3; *The Assyrian Tragedy*, P. 12; Dr. Wigram's *The Cradle of Mankind*, P. 368.
Mr. Johnson was Assistant High Commissioner of the League for the Repatriation of Prisoners of War and Chief of Refugees Section of the International Labor Office.

likely to be the last fatal pilgrimage[68] of your ancient nation! The *betrayal*[69] of your followers by friends you once trusted is the basest in history! The lust for economic power rode roughshod over principle and promise leaving the Assyrians stranded in a no man's land at the mercy of strange and hostile Arab tribesmen! They are now deserted, broken, and bleeding! They are dying!

VIII. The assassination of Bakir Sidqi is part of the logical sequel to the Assyrian cause. It has a spiritual significance much deeper than can be apprehended by Dr. Van Ess. In it is to be perceived the outline of divine justice. Who was Bekir Sidqi?

The son of a Turkish Provincial Governor, Bakir Sidqi was born in 1890 near Kirkuk and entered the Turkish Army at the age of eighteen when he gained a reputation as a ruthless soldier. During the last War he served on the Turkish staff and had a deep admiration for Turkey and Germany (his wife was German). In 1932, he visited England and attended courses at the Staff College, Camberley. In 1933, he conducted the Assyrian massacre as the chief agent of the Iraqi Government. In 1936, he launched a *Coup d'état* which resulted

68. A. H. Hamilton, *Road Through Kurdistan*, London: Faber & Faber, Ltd., 1937, P. 320-1. The Assyrian leaders were actuated by a purity of motive. Were I on the spot, it would have been my high privilege to have marched under the supreme command of the lion-hearted Patriarch Mar Benyamin.

When the future liberty of small nations was announced and *jihad* proclaimed in Turkey in the Spring of 1915, the Assyrians felt that they were now called upon to play their part on the side of Humanity and Christendom. Some of the spirited lines of Shamasha Ephraim's war-song, evinced the ardor with which they entered World War I:

Brothers, up and arm you; 'tis the Turk assails you;
Lo, the day is dawning when we march to meet the foe!
Quit your flocks and cornfields, grip your trusty rifles,
Forth we go to battle in the name of MAR SHIMUN.

Stand by one another, clansmen of the nation,
Tkhuma by Tyari, and let Baz by Jilu stand.
Like a band of brothers, hearts and hands united,
Forth we go to battle in the name of MAR SHIMUN.

David* is our leader, valiant in the combat,
He is captain over us to lead us forth to war,
Danger shall not daunt us, fear shall flee before us,
Forth we go to battle in the name of MAR SHIMUN.

Young men of the nation, tribes renowned in history,
Mighty men in battle were our fathers' kings of old.
Raging through the valleys, storming o'er the mountains,
Forth we go to battle in the name of MAR SHIMUN.

Nineveh the holy beckons back her children;
Know ye not her ancient walls shall be the victor's crown?
There alone, Assyrians, shall our race be established,
Forth we go to battle in the name of MAR SHIMUN.

*Brother of Mar Benyamin and father of the present Patriarch, now in exile in Cyprus.

69. Duff's *Guardian's*, Dublin Review, Oct. 1937, P. 20-21.

in the murder of his rival, Defense Minister Jafar al-Askari. On the evening of August 11, 1937, Gen. Sidqi and Air Chief Mohamed Ali Jiwad were sitting on the bench at the Mosul Airport, admiring the setting of the sun while waiting for a plane to fly to Turkey to witness the Turkish Army maneuvers. In the gathering darkness their cigarettes glowed peacefully. Capt. Mahmud Hindi sidled near and suddenly appeared from the shadows, revolver in hand. Bakir Sidqi did not have time to toss away his smoke. A succession of shots shook the air and the General pitched forward dead! Major Jiwad leaped at the assailant but he, too, fell forward on his face! And so, the malevolent spirit that lived by violence died by violence. This was a poetic justice, for August the eleventh was the exact day on which he had ordered the Someil massacre in 1933.

Bekir Sidqi is but one of the many *sinners* who suffered such a brutal end. However, all this is a matter of indifference to the Assyrians, for they belong to the past. Let them rest in the grave they dug for themselves. The cause of the Assyrians is a matter of human right. Let their appeal to the conscience of humanity continue until a safe home is found for them where calm reigns.*

I have now gone through all the absurdities and profaneness of the author's observations. If my annotated commentaries are false, it is a duty incumbent on him to refute them; if they are true, the publication of his book is a diabolical fraud perpetrated upon the reading public.

Among the cruel persecutions which the Christian Assyrians have suffered through many centuries, the attacks of Dr. Van Ess are the foulest. The spiritual representative of the Board of Foreign Mission of the Reformed Church has crusaded in the East against the Assyrian nation and Church with the tenacity of a bulldog. "If the Iraq Government's case were better known," wrote[70] he at a

*Sir John Squire has said that any broad-minded person knows that the Assyrians are an ancient Christian people which has had no chance at all, and that 'they are on our conscience; many of them have been massacred; and they are even more homeless than the Jews.

'Voltaire once said to somebody when a war was beginning: "Won't you make peace after the war ends?" The reply was: "Yes." His reply was: "Why not make it now?"

'Looking at all these national and racial problems one cannot help remembering that; also one remembers it *when looking at the moon and the stars.*' — The Illustrated London Magazine News, March 5, 1938, P. 378.

70. *The Heirs of the Ages*, Asia, June 1935, P. 343.
See my analysis of this article in Ch. X of Malek's *Betrayal*, P. 151-157.

time when the fortunes of the Assyrians seemed to be at their very darkest[71], "the sympathy which has been excited for the Assyrians in Europe and America, would be discovered[72] to be not so well founded." These poor Assyrians are the remnant of the pioneer missionaries[73] of *the Church of the East* who won souls for Christ from the First Century to the Fifteenth Century. They were no parasites. They poured into their calling soul-stirring and mind-awakening stuff of life. The "*Speaking Stone*" in Hsi-An-Fu is their undying testimony. To the legion of Chinese of those centuries, the Assyrian Christianity was the "luminous religion." "We make an effort to give it that appellation," they said, because "this true and eternal system of doctrine is wonderful, its merits and uses manifest[74] and brilliant."

The Rev. Mr. Van Ess was sent to the Middle East to preach the Christian faith among the Moslems. *Meet the Arab* contains, we notice, not a single example of Moslem conversion[75]. Such a moral failure in the life of one is bound to create a sense of guilt to such an extent as to lead one to become a persecutor. A pusillanimous attack upon a Christian minority which seeks nothing but the preservation of its spiritual unity in lands hostile to its faith by one supposedly a messenger of the Gospel is a contradition of both the letter and the spirit of that Gospel. It betrays cold synicism, deep-seated hypocrisy, moral perversity, and Christian perfidy.

71. See Duffy's *Guardians*, in which this ex-Police Commissioner of Palestine, author of many books and articles on the problems of the Near and Middle East, says: "The Assyrians still walk in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, looking with fearful eyes on their Moslem neighbors, knowing that their wives and daughters are always exposed to the shame of rape and lust, their sons to the risk of murder."

72. A student of international relations in Beyrouth informed me on July 18, 1944, that Van Ess' information was based on coffeehouse rumors in Iraq that "was rampant" in Iraq during the crisis.

73. *Athra* (Beyrouth), Feb. 15, 1939, No. 15.
See John Stewart's *A Church on Fire: Nestorian Missionary Enterprise*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1928, P. 352; *The Travels of Marco Polo*, N. Y.: Horace Liveright, 1926, P. 228-9.
As a people, the present Assyrian, Chaldean and Nestorian represents the Assyrians of antiquity—the subjects of Sargon and Sennacherib. Dr. Wigram's *The Assyrians and Their Neighbors*, P. 178.

74. P. Y. Saeki's *The Nestorian Monument in China*, London, 1916, P. 126 et seq. This Monument was built to commemorate the propagation of the Luminous Religion of a Luminous People in the Middle Kingdom. The Chinese called the Assyrian Christianity Ching Chiao. Prof. Saeki of Tokio says that they had no small share in the creation of the Golden Age of China. P. 115. "We perceive how keen and zealous the pioneer missionaries of the Assyrian Church were in trying to win souls for Christ. Surely in coming to China (635 A.D.), braving the dangers of the great Desert and travelling so far, they followed the example set by that Great Apostle to the Gentiles" (P. 133). "Verily the Syriac Church did abundantly fulfill her mission in the Far East." (P. 160); and scattered "the seeds of Western civilization" (P. 117) in Central Asia and the Far East.

75. "In fifty-five years of missionary work, we have yet to create a Church of Christ in Arabia."—*Our Church in Action: the Reformed Church in America*, 1944, P. 53.

POSTCRIPT

The Nestorian Tragedy in Iraq in the *Missionary Review* of February, 1936, p. 77, should have been added to the authorities cited in f.n. 8 in support of the story that the cause of the Assyrians is Christian in its essence.

The forces that influenced the Mosul Frontier Commision's decision as annotated in f.n. 20 should have the statement of Miss Gertrude Bell, the greatest exponent of the Iraqi independence:

> "In order to reassure them as to their future, two successive Iraq Cabinets . . . officially pledged Iraq to provide lands in Iraq for those Assyrians . . . and to devise a system of administration for them which would ensure to them the utmost possible freedom from interference. It can hardly be doubted that this liberal attitude on the part of the Iraqi Government had its influence on the deliberations of the Frontier Commission."—*The Letters of Gertrude Bell,* N. Y.: Horace Liveright, 1928, 11, p. 552.

Mosul (the modern successor to ancient Nineveh) is a Mesopotamian City (as well as a Province) which boasted political and economic importance centuries before the god of petroleum became one of the stakes of diplomacy. As to its racial composition, see H. C. Luke's *Mosul and its Minorities.* London, Morton Hopkinson & Co., Ltd., 1925.

Prof. Jackson's book in f.n. 59 was published by Little, Brown and Co.

To f.n. 63 should be added *The Betrayed Assyrians* which appeared in the *Church Times* (London), August 20, 1937, as cumulative authority on the fact that the massacre was the act of the Government.

That the Assyrians were betrayed by Great Britain as indicated by f.n. 69 is again proved by Major Douglas V. Duff in his *Poor Knight's Saddle.* London: Herbert Jenkins, 1938, pp. 78-9, 150.

Few of the authorities for the statement in *A Preliminary Note* that Jesus spoke the language of the Assyrians are:

Dr. Asahel Grant's *The Nestorians,* N. Y.: Harpers & Bros., 1841, p. 105.

Dr. W. A. Wigram's *The Assyrians and Their Neighbors,* p. 181.

George M. Lamsa's Introductions in *The Gospels From Aramaic,* Phila.: A. J. Holman Co., 1933; *Gospel Light,* Holman, 1936; *The Psalms from Aramaic,* Holman, 1939; and *The Modern New Testament from Aramaic,* Holman, 1940. The author proves beyond all reasonable doubt that *Syriac* is a misnomer wrongly created by Greek scholars for the *Aramaic* spoken in Syria. *Leshana Aramaya,* the language of the Assyrians, was the mother tongue of the New Testament writers; it was the colloquial and literary language of Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, and Mesopotamia from the 4th century B. C. to the 9th centry A.D. It was the *lingua franka* during the Assyrian and Babylonian rule and it is still the vernacular of the Assyrians and the Chaldeans.

Will Durant's *Caesar and Christ,* N. Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1944, pp. 512, 552, 559, and 535.

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